

Message Text

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ACTION VOE-00

INFO OCT-01 H-03 ISO-00 /004 W
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R 121805Z AUG 74
FM AMEMBASSY LONDON
TO SECSTATE WASHDC 2968

UNCLAS LONDON 10257

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: CVIS, UK

SUBJECT: NIV WAITING LINES IN LONDON

1. VISAS LEOPARD DEPARTMENT OM JULY 25. SENATOR
ADLAI STEVENSON 3RD, RE LETTER JUNE 26 FROM LEONARD E.
JACKSON OF HINSDALE, ILLINOIS, TO THE SENATOR ABOUT
LONG LINES AT THE VISA SECTION.

2. DURING LATTER HALF OF JUNE AND EARLY JULY THERE
WAS A SLOWDOWN IN POST OFFICES IN WEST END OF LONDON
WHICH CAUSED DELAYS UP TO TWO WEEKS IN POSTAL DELIVERIES.
THIS SITUATION HAS NOW GONE BACK TO NORMAL.
SITUATION FURTHER AGGRAVATED BY TRWOV RESTRICTIONS.
DURING THIS PERIOD, ALWAYS HEAVY FOR VISA ISSUANCES,
FAR MORE PEOPLE THAN USUAL CAME PERSONALLY TO THE
EMBASSY, AND THAT RESULTED IN LONG LINES, ALTHOUGH
NEVER IN THE 1,000 TO 2,000 RANGE ESTIMATED BY MR.
JACKSON. THE IMPRESSION OF LARGE NUMBERS WAS INCREASED
BY FACT THAT INSTEAD OF ALLOWING APPLICANTS TO CROWD
INTO VERY LIMITED WAITING ROOM SPACE, MAKING LIFE
MISERABLE FOR BOTH APPLICANTS AND RECEPTIONISTS, GUARDS
KEPT LINE OUTSIDE, AND ALLOWED IN FIFTY AT A TIME AS
SPACE PERMITTED. ALTHOUGH MAIL NOW REGULAR, MORE
APPLICANTS THAN NORMAL STILL COME PERSONALLY BECAUSE OF
LACK OF TRUST IN MAIL AND TRWOV RESTRICTIONS.

3. ALTHOUGH POSTED HOURS ARE 10-12 AND 2-3, ALL
MEMBERS VISA UNIT WORK STEADILY 9-1 AND 2-6 PROCESSING
MAIL AND DEALING WITH CASES RECEIVED DURING POSTED
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HOURS. DURING THE WORST OF CRUSH WE ACTUALLY OPENED

DOORS AT 9:00 A..., ALTHOUGH POSTED HOURS NOT CHANGED.
THE TIME THAT UNIT IS OPEN TO PUBLIC IS NOW UNDER REVIEW.

4. IT HAS BEEN SEVERAL YEARS SINCE VISA UNIT HAS BEEN
ABLE PROCESS VISAS "WHILE YOU WAIT" EXCEPT FOR
EMERGENCIES AND APPLICANTS TRAVELING WITHIN 24 HOURS.
OTHERWISE THOSE WHO WISH COLLECT ARE GIVEN RECEIPT AND
MUST CALL NEXT WORKING DAY. HOWEVER, THERE IS SEPARATE
LINE FOR PICK-UP WHICH GOES VERY FAST.

5. EMBASSY CANNOT PLACE STATIONARY OBJECTS SUCH AS
BENCHES ON PUBLIC SIDEWALK. EMBASSY WOULD PREFER THAT
ALL APPLICANTS BE SEATED IN WAITING ROOM BUT VERY
LIMITED WAITING ROOM SPACE PRECLUDES SAME. PLANS NOW
BEING MADE TO DO THIS IF ADDITIONAL SPACE CAN BE FOUND.
EXPECT CURRENT FOREIGN SERVICE INSPECTION WILL HAVE
SOMETHING TO SAY ABOUT THIS.

6. EMBASSY WILL CONTINUE GIVE AS RAPID SERVICE AS
POSSIBLE WHILE PROCESSING NEAR 30,000 IN MONTH. AT
SAME TIME WE MOUNTING CAMPAIGN TO ENCOURAGE APPLICANTS
APPLY THROUGH TRAVEL AGENTS AND CARRIERS AND GIVE
PRECEDENCE TO REPRESENTATIVES WHEN THEY BRING BLOCKS
OF PASSPORTS.
SOHM

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